

Volvo V40 D2 120hp

By Jim Mc Cauley



The latest evolution of the Volvo V40 is rated by the company as the most important model to be launched by them in the past 20 years. It replaces the S40 and V50 ranges and marks the début appearance of a new model under Chinese ownership following an unsettled period of whirlwind romances.

To be competitive in the premium corner of the C segment a new arrival has to offer something very special to be noticed. The German trio of A3, 1-Series and A-Class are masters of domination in this lucrative niche and any

newcomer has its work cut out for it in order to focus attention in its direction.

While the Teutonic competition relies on solid familiarity, the V40 advances the Volvo design signature with its coupé style bodywork and 5-door practicality. The exterior of the V40 was styled in Volvo's California studio, with the incorporation of a pedestrian airbag negating the need for required underbonnet space. This allowed the design team to lower the bonnet line and consequently the overall height of the car which sits 29mm lower than the C30 Coupé. Historic design cues also feature and the overall shape balances soft flowing panels with sharp boundary edges.

Engine choice comprises a range of petrol and diesel units, while automatic transmission options add to the selection. Test choice in this instance is the 2.0 litre D2 diesel which stretches fuel consumption to over 84 mpg on the official combined cycle linked to a zero road tax emissions of only 89 gms/km.



The interior is welcoming Volvo – pleasantly uncluttered with the optional TFT instrument screen on the test vehicle presenting the digital speed readout within the analogue rev counter face. This Thin

Film Transistor display permits a choice of three themes – Eco, Performance or Elegance.

Fire up, and the engine is respectably smooth, its 120 bhp taking it to 60 mph in 9.8 seconds with the potential to top 118 mph. A sweet 6-speed manual gearbox makes light work of gearchanges while steering response is sharp and communicative.

Final damper tuning was done on UK roads and throughout the car feels planted on the road – solid and confident.

Even though this model in Momentum Nav Plus

trim is mid range in terms of specification there are no shortcomings in equipment levels, including City Safety which will initiate full automatic emergency braking if the driver fails to respond at speeds of up to 31 mph. Using a laser sensor fitted behind the rear view mirror, the car will detect other vehicles or objects up to 30 feet in front and will automatically apply the brakes and reduce throttle input. Also standard is the pedestrian airbag which inflates a 'U' shaped protection across the base of the windscreen and up the 'A' pillars when a pedestrian is struck and falls onto the bonnet.

Other standard equipment includes excellent LED headlights, Hill-start assist, Bluetooth connectivity, electronic climate control, all-round electric windows and information centre with 5-inch colour screen as well as a DAB audio system. As the name suggests, this model also features satellite navigation. While the grades progress through another two levels, the best upgrades would appear to be the packs where a range of desirable extras are grouped in themes. Fitted to the test car was the Winter Pack which includes heated front seats, heated windscreen, headlight cleaning system and automatic windscreen activation, adding £575

to the standard price. Other extras fitted included the optional spare wheel with jack and uprated wheels from 16-inch to 17-inch. The model tested with the 120bhp diesel engine and in this specification is listed at £22,855. It is in Group 17 for insurance purposes and is covered by the company's comprehensive 3-year /60,000 mile warranty.



(Driven November 2016)